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The Monroe Doctrine

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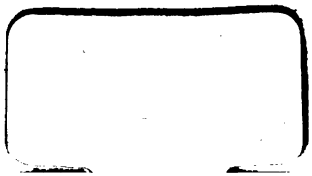

102

XVIII.

GENERAL SERVICE & STAFF COLLEGE LECTURES.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

BY

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Assistant Instructor, Department of Law.

FEBRUARY 1903.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

In presenting this paper, I wish to disclaim any originality as to thought or matter. I have studied the subject as treated by a number of distinguished writers, both American and English, and have endeavored to pick out the most important features; in doing so, I have quoted freely from the works consulted, and desire here to express my obligation to their authors.

ARTHUR P. S. HYDE,
1st Lieut. Artillery Corps.

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LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED.

American Diplomatic Questions,—James B. Henderson.
American Diplomacy, Freeman Snow, Ph. D., L. L. B.
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The Monroe Doctrine.—George F. Tucker.
The Monroe Doctrine.—W. F. Reddaway, B. A., Fellow King's College, Cambridge.
The Monroe Doctrine—Its Origin and Import.—William L. Scruggs, former United State Minister to Colombia and Venezuela.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

The instinct of self-preservation is the first law of nature. As a natural law governing all living creatures, it takes precedence over the social or artifical regulations of mankind. Under whatever municipal code an individual exists, he may freely ignore it when necessary to preserve life, and his only solicitude, if placed on trial, need be to prove that his alleged wrongful acts were committed in self defence. And so it is to a certain extent with nations. Like individuals, they stand before the public law—the law of nations—with definite rights and corresponding definite duties. First and fundamentally, they possess the right of sovereignty and indenpedence, and a freedom of action that is limited only by the obligation to respect similar rights in other nations. As in the case of individuals, the exercise of their own rights must be without injury to others.

International law permits one state to violate the sovereignty of another only in a few exceptional cases. Thus where one state has pursued a policy of acknowledged harshness or cruelty towards its subjects, to such an extent that it is condemned by all other civilized states, a state may be justified in intervening, with the consent, tacit or expressed,

of the other states of Christendom, for the purpose of righting the wrongs of the oppressed population. But any act tending to destroy the independence or in any way to lessen the sovereignty of a state, must find its justification in a higher code than International Law. In the Common Law, homicide in self-defence is justifiable. In this respect, therefore, there is a distinction between the Common Law and the public laws, the latter not yet having come to recognize fully self-defence as a justifiable cause of action. But though the public law has not distinctly provided for acts committed under the plea of self-preservation, it is constrained to tolerate them.

It is obviously impossible to frame definite and specific rules to govern all cases, as it is impossible to measure with accuracy, the amount of danger, that at a given time, may threaten a nation, hence the propriety of all defensive acts must be judged by the circumstances of each particular case.

It may therefore be said that the duty of states to recognize the sovereignty of other states, is, in general subordinated to the natural right of self-preservation. Many incidents may be found in the history of the world of such interference. In Europe, the greater nations exercise a watchful and jealous supervision over the affairs, not only of the smaller states, but of each other, amounting to a *quasi*-agreement known as the "Balance of Power," whereby all are pledged to prevent any one state from encroaching upon any other with the purpose of increasing its power. To this cause can be directly attributed, the failure of Russia to profit by the result of the Russo-Turkish War, and the present posession of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turk.

It is impossible to define rules or to anticipate what action may be required by national complications, but in general it may be said, that in the extreme moment when the integrity of the state is at stake, it may take almost any course within reason, and may rely upon international public opinion—that factor which is more potent even than International Law—for its sanction.

That principle of American policy known as the Monroe Doctrine, finds its origin and sanction in principles of a similar character. In this case there was no actual intervention,—no overt act upon the part of the United States against the sovereignty of any other state. Nor had any other state committed any overt act against the United States or against any of the South American states then struggling in their infancy. The declaration of President Monroe was a warning—or rather a three-fold warning—as to how the United States would regard the intervention that the President believed to be imminent.

In so far as the Monroe Doctrine forbids other sovereign states to do that which they may properly do as an inherent right of their sovereignty, it has no place in International Law, It was purely one of those acts of self-defence, which, falling outside of the pale of law, can only be resorted to by civilized nations at times of extreme necessity. In this manner only may it be regarded at the present day; and any attempt at converting it into a *right* to annex Cuba, to build a trans-isthmian canal, or to prevent a European state from using force, if need be, to collect a just debt from a South American state, is of necessity, a subversion of the principles as enunciated by its author.

The Monroe Doctrine was declared at the time of the threatened intervention of the Holy Alliance in the affairs of South America for the purpose of restoring to Spain her former colonies. It had its inception as a principle of American policy, nearly forty years before this.

To obtain a clearer understanding of the principles involved in the declaration, a brief resume of some of the events of the history of this country after the Revolutionary War and prior to 1823, will be of service.

As a result of France's assistance to the United States during this war, this government pledged itself to assist France in any future wars in which that country might be-

come involved with Great Britain. When war broke out in 1793, France demanded the aid of the United States, but, without a navy, with a national debt vastly out of proportion to our then meager resources, our national life under the constitution being still in an experimental stage; in fact, with every consideration against, and none but sentiment for, engaging in war in behalf of France, the United States was unable to live up to her treaty stipulations.

In view of these circumstances and the exaggereted pretensions of France, the government decided to maintain a strictly neutral position. Accordingly a proclamation to that effect was issued by President Washington on April 22nd, 1793, and to give legal force to the principles enunciated, Congress passed an act at its next session on June 5th, 1794, known as the first "Neutrality Act." It was to be in force for two years but was continued in 1797, and made permanent in 1800, by subsequent acts.

The events following the original passage of the act, the *quasi*-war with France, the buffetings of American commerce between France and England, resembling a game of battledore and shuttlecock, and almost resulting in the disappearance of the American flag from the ocean, had the effect of settling the conviction in the minds of Americans that their welfare and safety demanded an entire isolation from and independence of European politics.

Washington early realized this necessity, and the danger of taking part in European wars; and he saw in it a reason for superseding the government under the Articles of Federation by a closer union, to prevent the separate states from involving themselves in foreign complications. As early as January 1st, 1788, he wrote to Jefferson,

"The American Revolution has spread through Europe a better knowledge of the rights of mankind, the priveleges of the people, and the principles of liberty than has existed in any former period; a war in that quarter is likely to be kindled, especially between France and England; in the im-

pending struggle, an energetic general government must prevent the several states from involving themselves in the political disputes of European Powers. The situation of the United States is such as makes it not only unnecessary but extremely imprudent for them to take part in foreign quarrels. Let them wisely and properly improve the advantages which nature has given them, and conduct themselves with circumspection. By that policy, and by giving security to property and liberty they will become the asylum of the peaceful, the industrious, and the wealthy from all parts of the civilized world."

In his farewell address, Washington is still more emphatic, the principle of non-interference in European affairs, being no doubt impressed upon him by his vain attempts during his two administrations to reconcile the differences between the two parties in American politics, the English and the French. He said:

"The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

"Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations or collisions of her friendships or enmities.

"Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making

acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

"Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?"

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were of the same opinion, and each in his messages to Congress as well as in his private correspondence, reiterates the same principles. The opinions of these men, our first three presidents, show sufficiently the drift of American thought upon this question. Self-defence was the primary motive of this policy of isolation. To engage in the wars of Europe, it was felt, would endanger the very existence of the republic. To gain time, and to tide over the period of weakness incident to the founding of a new state and new institutions, were the great objects of Washington and his successors.

On this continent there were no political neighbors,—and that there should be none was a part of their general policy. It was this motive which prompted the purchase of the vast Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. This purchase gave to the United States a color of title to the Spanish province of West Florida, and existing conditions at home and in Spain made it likely that the United States could acquire this valuable strip of coast land. The title in question was perhaps less complete than the determination to secure it; for after a proclamation to the effect that the United States would hold the territory pending future settlement, President Madison addressed the Senate, January 3rd, 1811, as follows:

"Taking into view the tenor of these several communications, the posture of things with which they are connected, the intimate relation of the country adjoining the United States eastward of the river Perdido to their security and tranquility, and the peculiar interest they otherwise have in

its destiny, I recommend to the consideration of Congress the seasonableness of a declaration that the United States could not see without serious inquietude any part of a neighboring territory in which they have in different respects so deep and so just a concern, pass from the hands of Spain into those of any other foreign power . . . . The wisdom of Congress will at the same time determine how far it may be expedient to provide for the event of a subversion of the Spanish authorities within the territory in question, and an apprehended occupancy thereof by any other foreign power."

Two months later Congress indorsed the policy of the President in a resolution declaring:

"Taking into view the peculiar situation of Spain and her American provinces, and considering the influence which the destiny of the territory adjoining the southern boundary of the United States may have upon their security, tranquility and commerce, . . . the United States, under the peculiar circumstances of the existing crisis, cannot, without a serious inquietude, see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any other foreign power."

This message of the President and consequent resolution of Congress, has been misconstrued and distorted into a precursor of the Monroe Doctrine by some English writers, who speak of it as the "Madison Doctrine." These writers go so far as to say that the "Madison Doctrine" received the sanction of Congress while the Monroe Doctrine never did, and is therefore entitled to more consideration; all of which with a view to showing that the Monroe Doctrine was merely the expressed opinion of one man, or at best, the expression of the foreign policy of President Monroe's administration, and therefore of no weight concerning other matters. As a matter of fact, this so-called "Madison Doctrine" expresses the same views as the Monroe Doctrine, with respect to West Florida, but to West Florida alone. It is nevertheless a shadow of the Monroe Doctrine cast before.

The acquisition of East Florida, the remaining part of Spanish province that now constitutes in part the present state of the same name, was made in the same spirit, that of self-defense. The province had long been a refuge for outlaws, and a rallying point for filibustering expeditions of both the English and the Spanish, against the United States. The final cession of the province was brought about by treaty with Spain in 1819.

The spirit and purpose of the Monroe Doctrine is apparent in all these early accessions of territory, though ill defined and crudely expressed. The nation, however, had not yet reached that point of its development and strength, when even in self defense, it could proclaim a principle which in effect, hurled defiance at the whole of Europe.

The close of the War of 1812 brought about a new era Old party lines were dissolving, and the violent issues of the past twenty years were things of the past. The experiment of a democratic government had passed the formative period and was already an assured success. The nation had increased wonderfully, not only in territory, but in wealth and population, and with this increase came naturally, a spirit of self-confidence and self-reliance such that it was enabled to study its own foreign policy in a calm, philosohical light. For forty years a nebulous public sentiment had been steadily approaching the positive form it subsequently took, so that when a definite threat came from without in 1823, it became crystallized into a clearly and openly expressed policy.

The immediate causes leading to the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 are to be found in a series of events beginning with the revolutionary movements in South America, and culminating in the threat of the Holy Alliance to intervene in behalf of Spain and in the interests of monarchical government.

The wars of Napoleon in Spain had left that already palsied nation in a deplorable state of helplessness. Taking ad-

vantage of her weakness, her colonies in America seized the opportunity to throw off the yoke of the mother country, and one after another set up independent governments, from 1812 till 1820. Spain made several ineffectual attempts to reduce the rebellious colonies to submission. Their independence was not recognized by any European state until some time subsequent to the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine.

In the South and Central American struggles for freedom, North American sympathy was freely aroused. Numerous expeditions were fitted out for their assistance, in spite of the fact that neutrality had been proclaimed; and Congress passed several resolutions of sympathy. Henry Clay was the most ardent and eloquent leader in Congress for the "emancipation of South America." In 1817, during the first year of President Monroe's administration, a commission was sent to South America for the purpose of investigating political conditions there with a view of determining whether the revolutionary governments were worthy of recognition. The men composing the commission were well-known for their pronounced republican views, yet in this respect they differed in regard to the proper course to be pursued by the United States in the matter of recognizing the sovereignty of the former colonies.

In the midst of discussions in the cabinet regarding this question, disquieting news came from abroad in the early part of 1818, to the effect that a movement was there on foot to intervene in the affairs of South America with a view to restoring her colonies to Spain. Further confirmation of these reports came from several foreign ministers resident in Washington. John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State, immediately became alive to the situation, and curtly announced that "if the European alliance undertook to settle matters which concerned us so closely, and without consulting us, they should not be surprised if we acted without consulting them." Mr. Adams immediately sounded the British minister as to the attitude of England concernieg the matter, and

President Monroe even went so far as to suggest that Great Britain join the United States in recognizing the independence of the South American states.

Richard Rush, the American minister in London, was instructed to observe carefully the trend of affairs, especially of the intentions of the Holy Alliance with regard to the South American question. Mr. Rush approached the English Premier, Castlereagh, whose sympathies were thought to be with the European alliance. Castlereagh was very conservative and although for commercial reasons, he desired greater freedom of trade in the West Indies, he preferred to see the colonies restored to Spain, and the trade concessions be brought about by treaty with that country. He declined to assist in checking all future juggling with the question, by a prompt acknowledgement of the independence of South America.

Great relief was felt in Washington when it was finally announced that the alliance did not contemplate the use of force to subjugate the revolting Spanish colonies. The Russian Minister, Mr. Poletica, however, acting under instructions from his government, attempted to use his influence with the administration to prevent rupturing the "bonds of amity" between the United States and Spain. This of course referred to a recognition of the independence of the South American states. They were not recognized until May 1822, due to the bitter controversy between Clay and Adams, the former being in favor of immediate recognition, and the latter, though in sympathy with the South Americans, being of a more conservative temperament.

On December 3rd, 1822, President Monroe sent a message to Congress in which he laid the foundations for the structure, which, in the following year, he completed in all its towering proportions.

"Whether we reason from the late wars (in Europe) or from those menacing symptons which now appear in Europe, it is manifest that if a convulsion should take place in any of

those countries it will proceed from causes which have no existence and are utterly unknown in these states, in which there is but one order, that of the people, to whom the sovereignty exclusively belongs. Should war break out in any of those countries, who can foretell the extent to which it may be carried or the desolation which it may spread? Exempt as we are from these causes, our internal tranquility is secure; and distant as we are from the troubled scene, and faithful to first principles in regard to other powers, we might reasonably presume that we should not be molested by them; This, however, ought not to be calculated on as certain. Unprovoked injuries are often inflicted, and even the peculiar felicity of our situation might with some be a cause for excitement and aggression. . . . The United States owe to the world a great example, and, by means thereof, to the cause of liberty and humanity a generous support."

The following year the anticipated threat from Europe came. The allied sovereigns aimed a blow at the exponents of democracy, and the protesting answer of the United States was given sharp and clear in the President's message of December 2nd, 1823.

Before considering the discussions that arose in the Cabinet as to what course the United States should pursue, it is important to review the political conditions in Europe between 1815 and 1823.

After the fall of Napoleon at Waterloo, the four great powers, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and England, that had previously allied themselves for the purpose of opposing the "man of destiny," met by their representatives in Paris, in the fall of 1815, and there renewed their political ties by a fresh treaty (November 20th). The objects of this treaty were: 1st, To prevent Napoleon from regaining power; 2nd, To maintain the government of France; 3rd, To keep their army of occupancy in France safe from attack; and 4th, To meet again at the expiration of three years in order to consult

further, and "take such measures as should then seem to be best fitted to preserve the peace and happiness of Europe."

Napoleon had stood before the world as the exponent of liberal ideas notwithstanding the fact that he had filled the thrones of Europe with his relatives and created himself Emperor of France. Upon his final defeat and exile, a revival of absolutism set in throughout Europe, except, perhaps, in England, where liberal ideas had gained too firm a foothold to be upset by the mere change of tides of popular sentiment. In France, the same people, who fifteen or twenty years before, had idolized Benjamin Franklin, the apostle of democracy, and who had followed Napoleon in his march against absolutism, now welcomed the restoration of the Bourbons with wild acclaim.

Everywhere royalist mobs tore down the emblems of popular government; friends of liberalism were silenced or shot: the nation was purged of its democratic sentiments, and absolutism was rampant. Louis the XVIII, the legitimate Bourbon heir, was proclaimed king, and crowned with great pomp and ceremony. In Austria, the reaction was equally great, while in Spain it was carried to an astonishing extent. Ferdinand VII. returned to be welcomed by the people with most extravagant demonstrations. The constitution was burned, the Cortes dissolved and abolished, the lands of the Church restored, the clergy made free from taxation, and the inquisition reestablished.

In Russia and Prussia, the reaction was not so marked. The political pendulum had not swung so far toward the side of liberalism, hence in returning, it also fell short. The political systems in these two countries were, however, absolute.

This then, was the change in political conditions in Europe after the treaty signed in Paris, and before the reassembling of the powers at Aix-la-Chapelle in October 1818. At this meeting it was decided to withdraw the army of occupation from France, for the reason that absolutism had

been thoroughly revived in that country, and a legitimist occupied the throne. France was also admitted to the alliance. At Aix, the allies made a declaration that the tranquility of Europe depended largely upon the united action and watchfulness of the five sovereigns composing the league, and that the league "has no other object than the maintenance of peace and the guarantee of those transactions on which the peace was founded and consolidated." "The repose of the world will be constantly our motto." The league had not yet declared the specific object of suppressing all popular movements against absolutism, but the reactionary movement in that direction throughout Europe had left its impress upon the hearts of the legitimate rulers, and, barring the English, the five rulers in question were firm adherents to the theory of the divine right of kings.

Soon after the adjournment at Aix, the allies were called upon to act, and therefore to interpret the true meaning of their vague declarations. It soon became evident that they not only considered themselves the guardians of Europe, but that they formed a society for the perpetuation of monarchical institutions, and that it was their paramount duty to suppress popular movements against such forms of government, wherever found.

Great popular movements recur in the lives of nations with strange regularity. Like the waves of the sea, with corresponding depressions between, these movements hurl themselves against the bulwarks of conservatism, and as quickly subside. So have the waves of liberalism risen and fallen in Europe; but as in the swelling tides of the ocean, each successive wave reaches a higher point. The tremendous enthusiasm that had greeted Ferdinand's return to Spain, when at its very climax, in 1820, suddenly cooled. The revolt of the American colonies which had begun eight years before, had exhausted Spain's resources. The last dollar had been squeezed from the treasury, the last available man had been forced into the army, the last ship had sailed away with arms

and ammunition, and all to no purpose. In 1820, the last regiment that could be mobolized for trans-Atlantic service rebelled, and instantly all Spain was in a ferment. An incoming wave of liberalism swept over Spain, Portugal, Naples and Scicily, and even threatened France.

Frightened by this violent movement, Louis XVIII hastily called the allies together in conference at Troppau in October 1820. The English ambassador remained a silent spectator; the French envoys quarrelled among themselves and the original founders of the alliance,—Russia, Prussia and Austria, were left to act as they saw fit.

The result of their deliberations was to call the aged king of Naples to meet them at Leybach, and there take council with them concerning the suppression of the revolution in his kingdom. During this conference, the king's son joined the revolutionists, and the allies promptly sent an Austrian army into Italy, which defeated the prince, suppressed the rebellion and restored the king to his throne. Popular uprisings in Piedmont and Greece were similarly suppressed.

In 1822, the allies met in Vienna, adjourning thence in October to Verona, when the matter of the Spanish revolution was taken into serious consideration. Ferdinand had been forced to reassemble the Cortes, and the cause of liberalism was advancing. It appeared more and more improbable that, in her impoverished condition, Spain could regain her colonies. In this predicament, Ferdinand appealed to the allies, for their restoration. The allies hesitated. Russia, Prussia and Austria, which stood firmly by their anti-liberal doctrines, declared they would never recognize the seceded colonies until Spain had done so.

English sentiment had not yielded to the principles of the allies. The notions of divine right were distasteful to the people, who had prospered for centuries under constitutional government, and the principle of forcible intervention on the part of the allies, seemed to the English ministry to be wholly

improper. In the intervention to suppress revolutionary movements in Italy, however, England had no personal interest, and so remained a silent spectator, but in case of Spain, especially in so far as the South and Central American colonies were concerned, the case was very different. For centuries Spain had maintained an exclusive prohibition on the trade of these colonies, forbidding all intercourse with Europe, except through the mother country. With England's vast commercial interests, ever seeking new fields of operation this exclusiveness was particularly distasteful, hence it can readily be seen with what repugnance England looked upon the possibility of these colonies returning to their previous condition of isolation from her commerce.

Lord Castlereagh, the Prime Minister, was a conservative however, and as before stated, was averse to a recognition of the independence of the colonies, but with the hope that their commercial independence might be brought about in some other way.

Lord Castlereagh was appointed to represent England at the Congress of Verona, but his death before the meeting, brought Mr. Canning forward as Prime Minister, who named the Duke of Wellington as representative. At Verona, the allies drew up a secret treaty signed by Metternich for Austria, Chateaubriand for France, Bernstet for Prussia and Nesselrode for Russia. England was not a party to it, and thus the Holy Alliance reverted to its original members with the addition of France.

The Treaty of Verona provided that:

"The high contracting powers, being convinced that the system of representative government is equally as incompatible with the monarchical principles as the maxim of the sovereignty of the people with the divine right, engage mutually, in the most solemn manner, to use all their efforts to put an end to the system of representative government in Europe, and to prevent its being introduced in those countries where it is not yet known.

"As it cannot be doubted that the liberty of the press is the most powerful means used by the pretended supporters of the rights of nations to the detriment of those Princes, the high contracting parties promise reciprocally to adopt all proper measures to suppress it, not only in their own states, but in the rest of Europe."

It hardly seems possible that representatives of four of the most powerful states of Europe should bind their governments to such a treaty as this, only eighty years ago, and within the life-time of many persons now living. It is not to be wondered at that England refused to become a party to such an agreement.

One important result of the Congress of Verona, was the the agreement on the part of France to intervene in Spain in behalf of Ferdinand, with the intention of putting an end to the system of representative government. Accordingly, a French army, under the Duc d'Angouleme, crossed the frontier, and after a feeble resistance on the part of the revolutionists, restored Ferdinand to his despotic throne, in April 1823. The next step of the allies, seemed to be reasonably certain,—a movement against the South American revolutionists. Ferdinand having been reinstated on his throne, begged lustily to have his colonies restored to him. The advisability of taking such a step had already been broached at Vienna aud discussed at Verona. Reports of these comtemplated steps reached the government at Washington, where it was received with feelings of the gravest concern. It was feared that France might demand Cuba as a reward for her intervention in behalf of Ferdinand, and it was quite certain that if the Holy Alliance interfered in South American affairs, that some, if not all of the states would eventually become dependencies of other European states. In order to determine upon a course to be followed in regard to Spain's seceding colonies, the allies agreed to meet again in the fall of 1823.

Before discussing the interviews between Messrs. Rush and Canning, let us look for a moment at another cause leading to the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine, coming from another source.

Russia claimed Alaska by right of discovery by Vitus Behring in 1741. She had established various trading posts along the Pacific coast of North America as far south as the present state of California and claimed exclusive jurisdiction to all the included territory. The priveleges of control of,and trading in ,this territory had been granted to the Russian-American Fur Company, and by an Imperial Ukase of 1822. Russia laid claim to the entire Pacific Ocean north of the 51st parallel of north latitude, and forbade all intercourse with the natives in the territory claimed by the company. At that same time there was also a dispute between the United States and England as to the ownership of a part of the same territory, known as Oregon, the United states claiming as far north as latitude 55 degrees north by right of exploration and settlement, and England claiming as far south as the present northern boundary of California by right of discovery.

Both England and the United States denied the right of Russia to clalm exclusive jurisdiction of the North Pacific Ocean, and entered vigorous protests. A general controversy ensued, during which the fact was disclosed that both England and Russia considered certain alleged unoccupied portions of North and South America as *res nullius*, or "vacant lands" open to colonization. As a result, on July 2nd, 1823, John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, addressed an official letter to Mr. Rush, our Minister at London, in which he said, speaking more particularly of the Spanish-American republics, but nevertheless aimed at the territorial aggression on the Pacific coast by both England and Russia:

"Those independent nations will possess all the rights incident to that condition, and their territories will, of course, be subject to no exclusive right of navigation in their vicinity,

or access to them by any foreign nation. A necessary consequence of this will be that the American continents henceforth will no longer be subject to colonization. Occupied by civilized nations, they will be accessible to Europe on that footing alone."

Here, then, we have the first real, definite, beginning of the principle enunciated later in the year, which has ever since been the guiding principle in our foreign relations.

This letter, written presumably by direction of the President, was something more than an ordinary "instruction" to the Minister for his own personal information and guidance. It was intended as a formal notice to the British Government, directed through the regular diplomatic channel, that thenceforth the American continents were to be considered closed to European colonization; that there were no more unoccupied or "vacant lands" over which European Powers might contend for possesion; and there is no reason to doubt that Mr. Canning, the British Premier, to whom its contents were made known, so considered it.

On the 17th of the same month, fifteen days later, Mr. Adams orally repeated the substance of the same statement to Baron Tuyl, the Russian Minister in Washington; and in the course of the interview, he took occassion to add that the United States would "contest Russia's right to any new territorial establishment" on this continent, and "would assume distinctly the principle that the American continents were no longer subjects for any new colonial establishments." *

It has been frequently stated, and is believed by many, that the Monroe Doctrine had an European origin. The claim made, is, that the British Premier, Mr. Canning, suggested it to Mr. Rush during their personal conference in September 1823, relative to the hostile designs of the Holy Alliance upon the South American states. The absurdity of this claim seems too manifest to merit serious consideration. In the first place, the Canning-Rush conference did not take place until two

* Diary of John Quincy Adams.

months after Mr. Adams' note to Mr. Rush, and until a month and a half after Mr. Adams' interview with Baron Tuyl, in both of which instances the policy of this government, as afterward stated in the Monroe Doctrine, was clearly defined. Hence the impossibility that the first suggestion should have come from Mr. Canning at the time and place indicated; and it has never been intimated, much less asserted, that it came from him at any time prior to the date of his "private and confidential note" of August 20th, 1823, to Mr. Rush, in which he requested an interview with the purpose of sounding him on the subject of America's attitude toward the threatened intervention. Nor did that note embody any one of the three propositions which afterward became known as the Monroe Doctrine. In the second place we have Mr. Canning's own words in refutation of the claim, which, in the absence of rebutting evidence, ought to be conclusive. In a letter addressed to the British Minister at Madrid, dated December 21st, 1823, he said:

"Monarchy in Mexico and Brazil would cure the evils of universal democracy, and prevent the drawing of a demarcation which I most dread, namely, America *versus* Europe."

Further on in the same letter, speaking of his conference with Mr. Rush, he says:

"While I was yet hesitating, in September last, what shape to give the proposed declaration and protest" (against the designs of the Holy Alliance). "I *sounded* Mr. Rush, the American Minister here, as to his powers and disposition to join in any step which we might take to prevent a hostile enterprise by European Powers against Spanish America. He had no powers; but he would have taken upon himself to join us if we would have begun by recognizing the independence of the Spanish-American states. This we could not do, and so we went on without. But I have no doubt that his report to his government of this *sounding*, which he probably represented as an overture, had something to do with hastening the explicit declaration of the President." *

* Stapleton's "Canning and His Times," Wharton's "Digest of International Law." Sec. 57.

This letter, it will be observed, was written nineteen days after the date of Mr. Monroe's message to Congress,and related to an event that had occurred three months before. At that time, due to slow ocean travel it took at least three weeks for mail matter to pass from this country to Europe, and while it is barely possible that a copy of the President's message may have reached London before Mr. Canning's letter was written, the chances are that it had not, and the allusions in Mr. Canning's letter, to "the explicit declaration of the President" related to the Adams note of July 2nd, which, as he assumed, had been written by direction of the President, and not to the message itself. This, however, is not material. The essential point is, that Mr. Canning placed himself on record as opposed to the doctrine enunciated in both the message and the note, and hence could not have inspired either. It also makes his subsequent boast: "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old," ring false.

In connection with the Rush-Canning conference just referred to, Mr. Canning proposed that the United States join with England in making a combined protest against any acts of intervention in the affairs of South America by the Holy Alliance. This Mr. Rush refused to do unless Mr. Canning would agree to recognize the independence of the South American states, a condition which the latter was unwilling to concede. The result of this conference, as well as all the correspondence on the subject, was forwarded by Mr. Rush to the government at Washington.

The matter became the principal topic of discussion by the cabinet, the opinions of the different members varying considerably as to the courre that should be pursued. Mr. Adams was particularly emphatic in his opposition to a joint protest with England, and the President, though more conservative, agreed with him in principle. To unite with Great Britain in a joint declaration to the powers for the furtherance of any end whatever, would be to enter upon an entangling alliance;

indeed to subvert a sacred policy of the country. To issue a declaration such as the occasion required would involve an interference in the affairs of foreign nations, and if issued alone by the United States it might avail nothing against the combined forces of Europe. Such was the predicament in which the administration was placed. President Monroe determined to obtain the views of the then living ex-Presidents, Jefferson and Madison, and accordingly forwarded copies of the Rush-Canning correspondence to them, soliciting their counsel in this critical matter. The replies of these two men are valuable historic documents. Mr. Madison stated that the circumstances of the case and our relations to the new republics were such as to call "for our efforts to defeat the meditated crusade." Mr. Jefferson was even more explicit:

"The question you have presented by the letters you have sent me is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of Independence. That made us a nation; this sets our compass and points the course which we are to steer through the ocean of time opening on us. And never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. *Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs.* America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. She should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is laboring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavor should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom."

Upon these letters, and the earnest solicitation of Mr. Adams, it was finally decided that the declaration against the threatened intervention of the Holy Alliance, should be incorporated in the President's annual message to Congress, and that the United States should not in any way co-operate with Great Britain.

The President's message bears the date of December 2nd, 1823. Shortly after its beginning appears the follow passage:

"At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government, made through the minister of the Emperor residing here, a full power and instruction have been transmitted to the minister of the United States at St. Petersburg, to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on the northwest coast of this continent. A similar proposal had been made by his Imperial Majesty to the government of Great Britain, which has likewise been acceded to. The government of the United States has been desirous, by this friendly proceeding, of manifesting the great value which they have invariably attached to the Emperor and their solicitude to cultivate the best understanding with his Government. In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate, *the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.*"

After a digression upon other topics, the President turns to the subject of the threatened interference in South America by the allied powers of Europe:

"It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraord nary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the Unit ed States cherish sentiments the most

friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow-men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defence. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the Allied Powers Is essentially different in this respect from that of America. The difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defence of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. *We owe it therefore to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety* With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any manner their destiny, by any European power, *in any other light than as a manisfestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.*"

Such was the origin of the Monroe Doctrine. There is no room for doubt as to its genesis or its meaning. Like the principle of "Free ships, free goods," now an acknowledged part of International Law, it had purely an American origin; and its scope and meaning may be conveniently stated in three short sentences, viz:

1. No participation by the United States in the political broils of Europe; no interposition by Europe in the political affairs of the American republics.

2. No more European colonies on the American continents; those already here not to be interfered with.

3. No extension of European political systems on this hemisphere: no territorial expansion of existing European colonies thereon.

That is essentially all there is of it. It needs no construction. It never contemplated interference in any manner with vested European rights on these continents. It never contemplated interference by the United States to prevent European Governments from enforcing legitimate international obligations against the American republics, for international responsibility is the necessary concomitant of national sovereignty; but in enforcing such obligations, European powers are prohibited from seizing and permanently holding American territory in satisfaction for debt, or as indemnity for torts. It has never embarrassed European governments in the free and legitimate administration of their affairs in pre-established American colonies; but it has been more than once successfully invoked and applied to prevent any expansion of those colonies. It has steadily kept aloof from all "entangling alliances," express or implied, with European Powers in their ambitious schemes of conquest; but it has never embarrassed us in any legitimate effort to extend our commercial relations to any part of the world. In this sense, and in this sense alone, it has always responded to intelligent public sentiment in this country, and has had the support of all political parties.

ARTHUR P. S. HYDE.

ERRATA.

Cover and title page, top line, for *XVII* read *XVIII*.

Page 4, line 9, for *exaggereted* read *exaggerated*.

" 4, line 33, for *priveleges* read *privileges*.

" 7, line 8, for *authorities* read *authority*.

" 8, line 2, before *Spanish* insert *the*.

" 9, last line, for *concernieg* read *concerning*.

" 12, line 7, for *thronghout* read *throughout*.

" 12, line 33, for *reassesembling* read *reassembling*.

" 14, line 2, for *mobolized* read *mobilized*.

" 14, line, 31, for *yelded* read *yielded*.

" 15, line 3, for *in case* read *in the case*.

" 17, line 9, for *priveleges* read *privileges*.

" 20, line 30, for *courre* read *course*.

" 20, line 30, for *Ms.* read *Mr*.

" 22, line 11, for *Unlted* read *United*

" 23, line 10, for *Is* read *is*.

" 23, line 10, for *essentiaily* read *essentially*.

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